

however. The wise man sees nothing in this period to affright him. For he has provided against it like a good general, not out of the profits of the periodical, as stupid people might imagine, not out of his own pockets, but fairly and honestly out of the pockets of his own supporters and dupes—the people who believe in the chances of a prize. And this is how the dodge—for it can be called by no other name—is managed.

This is the actual working of the prize system. Is it within the power of the law to put this down? If the law cannot stop it perhaps publicity may make its practice not so remunerative as of old.

7. EVILS OF NOVELS AND ROMANCE.

The *Hours at Home* for July has an able article on "The books we read," from which we take the following extract. It was written by Rev. J. G. Craighead, one of the editors of the *Evangelist*:—

"There is still another class of books, which carry their character on their very face. These are paper-covered romances or novels, ranging from the modest 12mo. to the Victor Hugo huge 8vo., with hues varying from brick to orange, and ornamented or disfigured with woodcuts, portraits, mottoes, etc., designed to arrest the attention and gratify the perverted taste of those who find pleasure in such productions. Books like these—if indeed they deserve the name of their undignified *dishabille*—are on the whole, perhaps, the most nauseous things for a sober minded critic to encounter. He instinctively turns away from them. They are not golden leaf, beaten thin from a single grain of the precious metal; they are rather tin-foil or lead rolled down to such tenuity that a single breath would read them, and possessing no intrinsic value. The idea that tens of thousands read such stuff as this by the light of the midnight lamp, to the detriment of sight, health, peace of mind, and frequently principle, is simply appalling. The market should be closed to all such productions. Or if sold at all, they should be labelled, as are certain poisonous drugs, so that no one can mistake their character. Though they contain more opium than strychnine, still wherever they go they can work nothing but mischief. What false ideal worlds do they create, to which the feelings, the tastes, the imaginations, and the purposes of the reader adjust themselves! and just in proportion as they accept as real the painted images of the author, are they unfitted for the stern realities of the world in which they dwell. So far as the soul yields to these influences, it becomes distorted and mis-shapen. It creates for itself inevitable disappointments, and the discontent which springs up sours the temper, and disqualifies the individual for the proper duties of life. Many of the heroes of our popular romances and novels are of just that peculiar and impracticable class whom peaceable and orderly society would be thankful to dispense with. It disowns them as models for the every-day experience of mankind, and recognizes them as simply abnormal, when they are not detestable.

"Now works of this kind are not to be ignored or passed by, on the ground that they produce no appreciable influence. On the contrary, it is widespread and disastrous. They are extensively read, as published statistics prove, and as their own soiled and well-worn appearances testify. Ainsworth's 'Jack Shepherd' has made a multitude of heroic thieves, as their own confessions witness, having educated them in their youth to the false belief that the highest virtue is to bid defiance to all the restraints of law, and trample on all the common virtues on which the welfare of society depends. The susceptible age of the reader of this class of fiction, renders it the more pernicious. Were they persons of mature age, or independent thinkers, they might discriminate more readily between the chaff and the wheat. But they are the young and inconsiderate—those whose tastes are unformed, whose characters are still plastic, and who are at that transition period in life, when the impressions received are apt to become permanent, with the strong probability that they will carry their distorted notions through all their future years. They thus become not only unfitted for the responsibilities of practical life, but it will be well if, dissatisfied with their condition, and with their morals vitiated, they do not prove in the end a pest to society.—*Toronto Tribune*.

8. EVILS OF MODERN NOVELS—EXAMPLES.

There can be no doubt that in many modern "sensational" novels, and low newspapers, there is a systematic undermining of all morality; they are written in the true cant of humanity, that has no object put to impose, and this fact in our book notices we have often stated. It behooves parents to see that their children are not allowed to get from circulating libraries books in which offences against decency and manners may certainly be pointed out, and wherein the authors are doing their utmost to undermine the innocence of the young of both sexes. We refer

to the subject because we find that in his annual report to the Court of Aldermen, the Ordinary of Newgate again draws attention to the baneful effects of what is known as "sensational" literature upon the minds of the young and ignorant. He mentions a striking incident in support of his position. In August last, a soldier shot his corporal at Aldershot, and a police-sheet produced an illustration purporting to convey the details of the crime. The paper was circulated in the Raglan Barracks, at Devonport, where a soldier was under arrest for a trifling offence. He was unable to read, but the picture gave him the idea of obtaining similar revenge. On the following day he shot his corporal, and was afterwards hanged at Exeter. "That picture," said he to the Ordinary of Newgate, "put it into my head." Drunkenness and betting are likewise mentioned as having a prominent connection with crime.—*Montreal News*.

9. THE BENEFITS OF RELIGIOUS LITERATURE.

One writer says, "This is an age of anomalies, of resolutions, of epochs, of Apocalyptic trumpet-soundings and seal-openings. It calls for men. That we may respond to this call we must have many characteristics, one of which is love of truth." On the granite rocks of earth, as well as the book of Revelation, we find written sublime truths of God. Here the mind in its natural element searches for those truths, and presents the result of those researches to the press—the world's educator—the echo of whose voice is heard resounding in every clime; but whether it succeeds as an educator is owing to the character of its productions. We are satisfied that the superiority of the nineteenth century never derived its support or christian intelligence from the spurious productions of the press in this or former ages. Naught has given it its present pre-eminence but the power of moral reformation, which has been spread by means of the church and her instrumentalities. Among the instrumentalities in this great work stands the press, which under a proper influence sends forth its publications to the world, radiant with divine light, life and power. With these qualifications it is calculated to inform, balance and stimulate the mind, and reform the heart. In order properly to improve a man he must be brought in contact with his superiors, for he naturally partakes of the same spirit of the object of his adoration. Religion is a superior element, consequently as the press becomes inflated with this spirit, and through its production breathes the same into the heart of the reader, he becomes to some extent improved. But one particular feature of its beauty is this—as the world is a vast whispering gallery to the press—it is capable of teaching the same lessons to thousands of persons at the same moment of time. By perusing the religious newspaper the profane man has been led to bridle his tongue, the drunkard to enquire for the way of life, and many others harbouring the principles of infidelity to ascend the holy hill of God. No visitor of its kind is more welcome. Its cheering influence is felt at the merchant's desk, around the family circle, and in the palace of the monarch.

Again, it is necessary that the youth of our land be supplied with proper reading matter. Books and periodicals of some kind they will have, and as we would take great care of a young and tender plant until it is sufficiently strong to be exposed to the ruder elements, so should great care be taken of the youthful mind. Its first buddings are very tender. At first we see it amused with toys; as it matures it wants something of a more durable character. It begins to reason, and properly cultured it is soon found solving the profundities of philosophy, unravelling the intricacies of science, forming an instrument by which it has discovered clusters of starry worlds far on the outskirts of creation, weighing the planets, unseating mountains, blasting the granite rock, "grasping the impending thunderbolt, and hiding its powerless flash in the bosom of the earth;" and this principle is immortal—is to live forever! It is given unto us to keep blameless until the coming of our Lord. In view of these facts, how important that the youthful mind should have the proper teaching. Yet it is painful to see the press, in by far too many instances, swayed by society, and as changeable as the weather vane, belching forth its spurious literature to decoy the young and unwary into the ways of immorality and death.

One writer truly remarks, "many of our periodicals indeed light up the world—but with gas. They run to and fro, but do not always increase knowledge; their influence is like that of the volcano, producing death and destruction. Open the world's library, and behold the popular literature. How often at the midnight hour does the mind of the novel reader grow giddy as on the aerial wings of imagination it soars far away in the mazy region of fancy and fiction, seeking as did Noah's dove a resting place, and returning to the place whence it started weary with its fruitless flight; sick and tired of this treacherous sea, it seeks repose in the air castle built by the disordered imagination, but the couch is one of discontent,